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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

558TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

19 NOVEMBER 2015

PSC/PR/1.(DLVIII)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 558th meeting on 19 November 2015, held an open session, dedicated to the theme: “The impact of El Nino on Peace, Security and Stability in Africa and the Humanitarian Consequences”. The Open Session was held pursuant to the recommendation of the Abuja Retreat of the PSC with the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, held from 14 to 16 September 2014, that the Continental Early Warning System should broaden its focus to include non-traditional and non-military threats to the continental peace, security and stability.

Council welcomed the presentation by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Dr. Aisha Larada Abdullahi and by the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mrs. Kyung-wha Kung. Council also took note of the statements made by the representatives of AU Member States and those of the members of the United Nations Security Council, the European Union, bilateral and multilateral partners and humanitarian aid organizations, as well as of civil society organizations.

Council acknowledged the inextricable link between peace and security, development and climate change. Council also acknowledged that El Nino is one of the major and recurrent non-military threats to the sustainable development, peace, security and stability of the African continent.

Council noted with deep concern about the impending food security crisis and other humanitarian consequences and security implications of El Nino, particularly, in the following most affected Southern African countries, namely, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, as well as in the following Horn of Africa countries, namely, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan, as well as the countries of the Sahel. In this regard, Council underscored the need for monitoring household food security and market conditions in order to ensure an effective humanitarian response. Furthermore, and drawing lessons from the fight against the recent Ebola Virus Disease in parts of West Africa, Council appealed to the Member States, which are in a position to do so, as well as to the humanitarian aid organisations, the African private sector and the rest of the international community, to enhance their support to these countries in their efforts to alleviate the effects of El Nino.

Council expressed deep concern over the negative impact of the El Nino to the fragile economies of the affected countries, particularly their reduced capacity for economic recovery, as well as to meet the Millennium Development Goals. In the same context, Council also expressed concern over the impact of El Nino on the overall economic growth prospects for Africa as a whole.

Council also noted with deep concern the prevailing humanitarian crisis in the Sahel region which has caused untold suffering, particularly to the Sahrawi refugees living near the town of Tindouf, in south western Algeria. In this regard, Council also appealed to all Member

States, in a position to do so, as well as to the humanitarian aid agencies and the rest of the international community, to provide assistance to the Sahrawi refugees and to all the other affected communities in the Sahel region as a whole.

Council underscored the importance of investing more in building the disaster risk reduction capacity and resilience of the communities, countries and regions most affected in order to minimize their future vulnerability to similar humanitarian emergencies.

Council also underscored the urgent need to mobilize necessary financial resources in order to prevent further deterioration of the situation in the countries most affected by El Nino.

Council stressed the need for the AU and the international community to coordinate their efforts in responding to the humanitarian crisis caused by El Nino and to take the necessary steps to ensure a credible disaster risk reduction preparedness and resilience capacity before a possible La Nina event materializes.

Council expressed gratitude to all humanitarian aid agencies, as well as to the bilateral and multilateral partners who are already providing support to the mitigation and recovery efforts of the countries most affected.

Council looked forward to the successful convening of the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, in Paris, France, from 30 November 2015 to 11 December 2015 and, in particular, to a strong legally binding universal agreement on climate change.

Council agreed to remain actively seized of the matter.

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